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ABSTRACT

The material included in this report describes a plan which the Center for Urban Education developed and which Research for Better Schools, Inc., submitted to the Harrisburg City School District Board. The major purpose of the report was to promote open discussion of educational excellence, racial balance, equity, stability, and economy at many levels in the School District including Board members, administrators, teachers, parents, community groups, and pupils, and plan for the systematic racial desegregation of the Harrisburg Public School system. The plan for desegregation entails two parts: (1) recommendations to be put into effect by September, 1970 -- the institution of two Early Childhood Centers, eight elementary schools generally clustered together to include grades 3-6, one intermediate school for grades 7-8, two comprehensive four -year high schools, and provision for special education; and (2) recommendations to be implemented between 1971 and 1974--construction of a unified Education Plaza for grades 3-8, reorganization of the elementary schools, creation of science, liberal arts, and humanities focuses in high schools, and development of college-high school cooperation. (RJ)

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A PLAN FOR QUALITY DESEGREGATED EDUCATION

FOR THE HARRISBURG CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Submitted by

RESEARCH FOR BETTER SCHOOLS, INC.
1700 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

(215) 561 - 4100

To the

BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

OF THE HARRISBURG CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

UD010456

April 29, 1970

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April 29, 1970

Board of School Directors
Harrisburg City School District
1201 North Sixth Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Board Member:

The material which is included in this report describes the plan Research for Better Schools, Inc. is submitting for quality desegregated education in the Harrisburg City School District.

RBS accepts full responsibility for the plan and report. However, neither the plan nor the report necessarily reflects the views of the Corporate Board of Directors or RBS. The Center for Urban Education, under a contractual relationship to RBS, developed the plan and report. The Center and its staff are to be commended for their efforts in this task.

The information contained in the report is presented to the Board for its review and judgment. If, in arriving at or after its review and judgment, the Board decides to disseminate the report to its internal and external publics and if the authorship of the disseminated report is to be attributed to RBS, no changes or deletions in the report are permitted. In other words, if the Board decides to disseminate a revised or edited version of the report, authorship must be attributed to other than RBS.

A major purpose of the report is to promote open discussion of educational excellence, racial balance, equity, stability, and economy at many levels in the District, including Board members, administrators, teachers, parents, community groups, and pupils. The plan and report have been designed to promote such discussion.

The Harrisburg City School District has indicated a commitment to desegregation of its schools. Hopefully, this report will be accepted in the spirit intended, namely that of providing a major step toward the attainment of educational excellence for all pupils in the District.

Sincerely,

James W. Becker
Executive Director

REORGANIZING THE HARRISBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Plan for Quality Desegregated Education

April 29, 1970

Submitted by:

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

in fulfillment of the contractual obligations to

RESEARCH FOR BETTER SCHOOLS, INC.
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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PREFACE

This report is addressed to the task specified for Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS) as follows:

> "RBS shall prepare and present to the Board for its consideration a written plan for the systematic racial desegregation of the Harrisburg Public School System."

The data-gathering and study which must precede the preparation of such a plan have been completed, and the plan has been written. The purpose of this report is to present the plan to the Board for its judgment and review.

OVERVIEW

This report contains five main sections. In the first section, the plan for quality desegregated education is described. This description entails two parts: (1) those recommendations which are to be put into effect by September of 1970; and (2) those recommendations which are to be implemented between 1971 and 1974. The second section explains what the plan is designed to achieve: educational excellence, racial balance, equity, stability, and economy. The third section explains how students will be assigned to schools in the recommended plan and gives an estimate of the percentage and number of pupils to be bused. In the fourth section, recommendations are made concerning the steps that the District should take to prepare for the implementation of the plan. The fifth section contains a map which graphically outlines the plan for quality desegregated education.

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SECTION I

THE PLAN

The following two-part plan is recommended for the Harrisburg City School District. The first part is to be put into effect by September of 1970. The second part is to be implemented between 1971 and 1974.

Part One

1. Two Early Childhood Centers, to include four grades - pre-kindergarten through second grade. One Center will use Riverside, Camp Curtin and Cameron; the other will use Foose, Shimmell and Lincoln.
2. Eight elementary schools, generally clustered together, to include children in grades three through six. These schools are Marshall, Downey, Steele, Hamilton, Melrose, Boas, Woodward, and Benjamin Franklin.
3. One intermediate school for grades seven and eight at Webster and Edison.
4. Two comprehensive four-year high schools at William Penn and John Harris.
5. Provision for special education at Hamilton, Cameron, Benjamin Franklin, Boas, Downey, and Melrose, and for emotionally disturbed and brain damaged children at St. Paul's Church; William Penn and John Harris for secondary students.

Part Two

1. Construction of a unified Educational Plaza for grades six through eight by 1974.
2. Utilization of the Edison plant as an elementary school by 1974, and the elimination of Webster and Hamilton plants.
3. Creation of science focus in William Penn high school program and a liberal arts and humanities focus in John Harris, both by 1971.
4. Development of a further educational sequence between William Penn High School and the Harrisburg Community College by 1974. Twelfth graders at William Penn can take some courses at the College, perhaps for advanced placement credit.

SECTION II

WHAT THE PLAN WILL ACHIEVE

The plan is designed to achieve a number of important goals: educational excellence, racial balance, equity, stability, and economy. If properly implemented, the proposed educational reorganization achieves these goals as follows:

Educational Excellence

By bringing together children from pre-kindergarten through second grade in special centers, the Harrisburg school system will develop a program of enriched early childhood education for all children. The Centers will incorporate Headstart gains into a continuing program, and all children will be able to reach the schools accommodating grades three through six at about the same academic and developmental level. There will thus be less need for later compensatory programs. Because they each have a large number of children, the Centers can economically offer a wide variety of special programs and special teachers to teach them. Children will also share facilities that individual neighborhood schools could not afford. Not only gyms and playgrounds, but also psychological services, science equipment, programmed reading materials, and diagnostic resources will be equally available to all children and will provide more opportunities for individual instruction and program than individual schools could manage.

The elementary schools (grades three through six) will also be better able to meet the needs of a special age group. The Downey School will

retain IPI, and all schools will be able to implement more efffective and more imaginative programs, such as IPI.

The intermediate school for grades seven and eight, and later the Educational Plaza for grades six through eight, which is planned for 1974, will make possible an intermediate school geared to the special psychological and educational needs of 11 to 14-year olds. No longer a "junior" high school, the intermediate school will give more individual attention to each child and recruit more specially trained teachers, not secondary school teachers waiting for "promotions" to the senior high. Educational innovations such as team teaching and flexible scheduling will help provide a program specially designed for children of this age. The Educational Plaza for all intermediate school children, planned for 1974, will include arrangements for better coordination of curriculum and continuity of program by offering facilities, equipment, and services to be shared. Because of the large number of children, more special programs and special teachers will be possible.

Because of their size, the Early Childhood Centers and Educational Plaza will provide more resources for teachers and children; such resources also will attract more black and white qualified teachers and bring teachers together for a pooling of knowledge and ideas. Educational excellence requires good teachers, and good teachers must have vigorous in-service professional staff development programs. The good facilities and good professional relationships of large well-equipped centers will, in turn, encourage teachers to try new ideas and activities and exciting teaching

methods. Teacher aides will have a better chance to learn and to establish good professional relationships with a wide variety of teachers.

The comprehensive high schools will include the ninth grade and will continue to serve both those students who end their formal education at graduation and those who plan to go on to technical school, junior college, or college. The vocational-technical programs will serve, as before, those who go from high school into industry; William Penn will be enhanced by additional science facilities and teachers, and John Harris will attract those with special interest in the arts and humanities. The high schools, like the other schools, will respond to the needs of individual students by providing more specialized facilities and services. The curriculum specialities of both schools will attract students from throughout the city, some of whom, perhaps, might otherwise have sought such programs elsewhere. Moreover, the relationship with the Harrisburg Community College will encourage more students to go on to a four-year general college program as well as to the two-year general arts or specialized programs now available. The high quality of the program offerings will both retain present students and attract others.

Racial Balance

To ensure equal access to excellence for all, every public school in Harrisburg will reflect in its student population and teaching staff the racial and socio-economic composition characteristic of the public school system as a whole. Children will be assigned to schools through a computer program.

Racial balance, however, is not only a matter of equal access to good education; it is also, like better teaching, a component of good education. Schools and classrooms will be made up of black and white, rich and poor, quick students and slow ones. Educators believe that learning depends not only on libraries and laboratories but also on getting to know students of different races, cultural groups, economic backgrounds, and levels of achievement. The number and variety of teachers and children in the Early Childhood Education Centers and in the Educational Plaza will make it possible to group children heterogeneously, on the basis of social and emotional interactions as well as on the more arbitrary basis of age. Grouping for the most effective learning, however, does not mean that one child should be with the same group for all purposes - most children, as most adults, have some special strengths and some special weaknesses. In good learning situations a child may be with a group of four for a science project, with another group of five for spelling and with just three other children for reading. Such grouping provides exciting possibilities for team-teaching, programmed learning and audio-visual instruction. It depends on each child's social and emotional maturity, learning needs, and on the dynamics of each group. This kind of flexible grouping requires a large pupil enrollment of a particular age so that a large variety of combinations are possible. The Early Childhood Centers and the elementary schools will supply this kind of enrollment so that each child can develop at his own speed and in his own way, instead of being lumped together by age, race, or achievement tests.

The plan calls for a better racial balance of staff as well. The schools will continue to vigorously recruit qualified black and white teachers and administrators. They will also make a special effort to recruit and place throughout the schools a larger number of clerical, custodial, and cafeteria employees from black and other ethnic groups. Black non-professionals are now heavily concentrated in five de facto segregated schools. The reorganization of the schools will make possible a better distribution of non-professional as well as of professional staff.

Equity

No racial group will have to transport more children than any other group; each group will be subject to transportation equally since the computer program will assign each child at random on the basis of race, socio-economic status, and academic achievement in order to achieve completely mixed schools and classrooms. The same instructional programs will be available to everyone. (The only exception is the IPI program to be retained in Downey.)

Each Early Childhood Center will make its facilities available to every child in the Center. Services will be better distributed since specialists need not move from school to school among different neighborhoods but can give each child the same time and expertise. Seventh and eighth grades in both Edison and Webster will use the good facilities at Edison. As new construction is completed, sixth graders will join seventh and eighth graders in an Educational Plaza where common facilities and services are available to all.

The reassignment of pupils to schools throughout the system also lends itself to a better distribution of professional and non-professional staff. Because races, economic groups, and levels of achievement are to be equally mixed in each school, there will be new opportunities and a new need to hire additional black teachers and black staff members, such as custodial and cafeteria workers. Children need models of their own race at all levels to respect and admire. The 64 black clerical, custodial and cafeteria employees now concentrated in five schools will be distributed throughout all the schools as part of a policy of assigning staff as well as students equally. To be consistent with the standard of group equity, there will be a policy of fair recruitment, selection, placement, and promotion of staff on all levels in the school system.

Stability

The method of assigning students to each school will allow for adjustment of ratios each year to coincide with total population ratios. Since students are not assigned by district, housing patterns or population movements will not affect the distribution of school children. As population changes over the years, the board will be able to maintain the student ratios without changing the basic school plan. By 1974 the construction of a unified Educational Plaza for grades six through eight will bring together all children of these age groups in one place, encouraging better coordination of program and maintaining a relatively stable student group.

Better education will also have a stabilizing effect on the school population. Both those who go on to further education after high school and those who do not will have better preparation in the Harrisburg schools. Excellence is likely to act as a magnet, holding students and their families who might otherwise seek better programs.

Economy

Neighborhood schools tend to be uneconomical because each one must have facilities such as playgrounds, gyms, auditoriums, and cafeterias. They must also often share the professional services of psychologists, guidance counselors, and art and music teachers, who currently waste much of their time moving from school to school. Neighborhood schools, moreover, vary greatly from school to school in the quality of their facilities and in their use. Many schools do not have laboratories, nurse's rooms, art rooms, music rooms, guidance counseling facilities, or teachers of specialized subjects or skills.

In the large centralized Early Childhood Centers and Educational Plaza, expensive facilities can be used in common and professional services can be centrally located and available to all. This common use of facilities and services will be far less expensive than the duplication necessary under a neighborhood school system.

The Centers and Educational Plaza can also use teachers and programs more economically. When specialists serve a large number of students, their cost per student is relatively low. Smaller schools could not

afford to meet as many needs because there are not enough students to make the best use of alternatives.

Large-scale educational centers also permit more efficient and economical organization of custodial services, purchasing, and provision of hot lunches. The Centers and Plaza can save money by dealing in larger quantities.

Although construction of an Educational Plaza may seem to be costly, it may be more economical in the long run than continued renovations of individual schools. Another cost factor of individual school construction is shifting residential patterns in the community. As people move, new schools must be built and older ones, still sound, become under-utilized. The reorganized schools with their large attendance area are impervious to such shifting residential fashions. The Centers and Plaza can provide more economically for absolute population growth.

Although more children will be transported under the school reorganization plan, some of this additional cost can be offset by what the parent now pays. Parents who drive their children to school or who send them on public buses now bear much of the present cost of transportation.

SECTION III

HOW STUDENTS WILL BE ASSIGNED

To see how well our short-term plan would work we analyzed the possible distribution of students enrolled in several different grades, and found that the plan would require busing approximately 28.8 per cent of the total number of the present enrollment in the public schools of the Harrisburg school system. We arrived at this figure by estimating that children could walk to school a distance that ranges in some cases to perhaps a mile but that the great majority would walk a distance of less than half a mile, approximately what they are walking presently.

Pennsylvania law states that a child may walk to school up to a mile and a half. If the law were applied strictly, the percentage that would require busing would probably be reduced to less than half of our estimate.

We understand that the geographical situation of Harrisburg, the need to cross railroad tracks, and the lack of traffic lights in many crossroads make rigid application of the law practically impossible, but we must emphasize that, if for economic reasons the board must reduce the amount of busing, the implementation of our plan will not suffer. Slightly increasing the distance which a student is required to walk to school would mean reducing the number of children being bused.

Pupil populations, by schools and classes within schools, will be balanced according to the following criteria:

1. Race evenly distributed with a maximum variance of 10 per cent from

the total percentages of black and whites enrolled in the system.

2. Sex of students evenly distributed among all schools and classes within schools.

3. Children from below poverty-line families evenly distributed, with a maximum variance of 10 per cent from the total within the Harrisburg School District.

4. For grades three through six, extremes of an achievement scale evenly distributed, so that all schools will have about the same percentage of children deficient in basic skills, as well as of the most capable of pursuing independent study.

5. Residential location considered in assigning schools, so as to minimize busing.

Early Childhood Centers

To calculate the minimal busing involved in our plan, we had to have figures for the total enrollment in the 4 and 5-year-old kindergarten. These estimates were provided by the Director of Pupil Accounting and Child Guidance of the Harrisburg School District. We projected this year's figures on next year's classes. (See Table 1)

Approximately 20 per cent of the eight hundred children going to 4K will not need to be bused because they live in the immediate vicinity of the Early Childhood Centers. Of the one thousand estimated 5-year-old kindergarten children, we predict that approximately 35 per cent will be bused.

TABLE 1

ESTIMATED TOTAL BUSING REQUIRED BY GRADE

Grade	No. of Children to be Bused	
4K	640	
5K	350	
1	450	
2	443	
		1,883
3	305	
4	305	
5	258	
6	263	
		1,131
7	349	
8	350	
		699
9	-	
10	-	
11	-	
12	-	
		-
	TOTAL	3,713

We estimate that approximately 35 per cent of the first graders will have to be bused.

Table 2 shows our analysis of the projected second grade for 1970-71. It shows a total percentage of 53.2 blacks and 46.8 whites and a distribution that does not vary 10 per cent from this total in any school. The total percentage of boys and girls is 51.7 and 48.3, respectively, and the variance is never more than 2 per cent from this distribution.

According to these figures, there appear to be fewer children from families below the poverty level in the second grade than there are in the higher grades, a circumstance that we attribute to the lack of data on children who have been in the school system for a shorter time. Only one school has a variance of as much as 9.8 per cent from the total distribution; the next largest variance is less than 5 per cent.

The total number of children to be bused in the second grade is 443, distributed in four of the six buildings that will house the Early Childhood Centers. This number is 33.7 per cent of the total enrollment projected for the second grade in the year 1970-71.

Elementary Schools: Grades Three through Six

Table 3 summarizes our analysis of the projected number of elementary school children who will attend grades three through six in 1970-71. It shows a total of 55.2 per cent blacks and 44.8 per cent whites, a distribution of 50.5 per cent boys and 49.5 per cent girls, and a total of 22.6 per cent children from families below the poverty level. In these

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF PROJECTED SECOND GRADE - 1970-1971

	Classrooms Assigned To Grade	Percentage Blacks	Percentage Whites	Percentage Male	Percentage Female	Percentage Below Poverty Level	Total No. Bused In	Total No. Students
Riverside	2	51.5	48.5	51.5	48.5	15.2	35	66
Camp Curtin	12	48.4	51.6	50.8	49.2	14.9	241	382
Cameron	5	53.3	46.7	51.5	48.5	15.4	-	169
Lincoln	7	63.1	36.9	53.6	46.4	13.9	-	231
Shimmell	5	44.8	55.2	50.9	49.1	18.9	39	165
Foose	9	56.3	43.7	52.0	48.0	28.3	128	300
TOTAL 2ND GRADE		53.2	46.8	51.7	48.3	18.5	443	1,313
						PERCENTAGE BUSED		33.7%

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF PROJECTED GRADES THREE THROUGH SIX - 1970-71

School	Classrooms	Percentage Blacks	Percentage Whites	Percentage Male	Percentage Female	Percentage Below Poverty Level	Percentage Achievement Low	Percentage Achievement High	Total No. Bused In	Total No. Students
B. Franklin	23	57.6	42.4	47.8	52.2	24.7	13.6	6.2	235	594
Boas	12	50.0	50.0	52.2	47.8	28.2	19.2	9.0	110	312
Downey	18	63.4	36.6	49.6	50.4	25.7	11.7	9.6	169	470
Hamilton	27	59.8	40.2	51.1	48.9	24.7	14.8	4.9	177	732
Marshall	19	51.2	48.8	52.4	47.6	19.5	11.6	7.5	253	508
Melrose	22	46.8	53.2	48.7	51.3	16.4	13.3	8.6	-	581
Steele	25	53.8	46.2	51.9	48.1	19.1	11.5	5.6	89	628
Woodward	15	57.0	43.0	51.3	48.7	26.4	13.5	5.7	98	386
TOTAL 3-6 GRADES		55.2	44.8	50.5	49.5	22.6	13.4	6.9	1,131	4,211
								PERCENTAGE BUSED		26.9

four grades, 26.9 per cent will be bused.

Of students likely to be enrolled in grades three through six, 13.4 per cent fall in the lower rank of a five-point achievement scale; 6.9 per cent are in the higher level of the scale. Children at both extremes of the scale have been distributed among all the schools so that no school will have a disproportionate number of students who are deficient in basic skills or of those who have high achievement ratings.

Intermediate School: Grades Seven and Eight

For the intermediate school, we project busing for all students who live west of the railroad tracks. This busing can eaily be reduced by a substantial margin if children who live in the vicinity of the bridges and within a mile radius of the schools are allowed to walk to classes.

Comprehensive High Schools: Grades Nine through Twelve

No busing is contemplated for high school students.

Conclusion

Though the data which we analyzed were in some instances incomplete, due to the current unavailability of some information, we are convinced that carrying out our short-term plan is entirely feasible within the resources of the Harrisburg School District.

Still needed are more exact dataon residence. Each child is now classified under a residence zone determined by the present neighborhood school organization. To improve distribution under the new plan, we recommend

subdividing these zones so that the central pupil accounting division can pinpoint more exactly the area where a child lives. Distribution will be accomplished with the help of a computer, which guarantees the complete objectivity of the assignments.

SECTION IV

PREPARATORY STEPS

Between May and September, 1970, the Harrisburg Public Schools should take certain steps to prepare for the new school organization. The following are advisable:

Staff

1. Set up several orientation workshops for teachers, supervisors, and administrators to familiarize them with the new organization.
2. Set up orientation workshops for non-professional staff.
3. Increase recruitment of well-qualified black teachers.
4. Provide opportunities for early childhood teachers to meet and discuss needed facilities. They should also have the opportunity to work with the buildings and grounds committee in defining and implementing these needs.
5. Provide curriculum workshops for teachers on all levels to plan new curriculum and coordinate curriculum throughout the grades. Although curriculum probably should not change radically in the first year, the reorganization of the schools will provide new opportunities for imaginative programs and teaching methods. Staff may want to revise social studies, language arts, math and science, and to include programs specifically geared to educationally disadvantaged children and slow learners.
6. Provide training sessions for early childhood and elementary teachers most of whom will not have taught in desegregated classes. Topics

should include learning styles, pupil performance, teacher-pupil relations, teacher expectations (it is important to generate high expectations of all students), and discipline. Teachers should suggest topics for future training sessions. Each early childhood and elementary teacher might spend a week or more during this spring at a school with a different racial composition under a school exchange program.

Students

1. Arrange orientation meetings for students in their new schools with their teachers. Ninth graders, now assigned to the high school for the first time, should also meet at the high school with teachers and some upper classmen before school opens.
2. Provide as many interracial experiences as possible for children before September of 1970. Some of these activities might include: (a) a frank discussion in each elementary school class, perhaps led by a school psychologist, on racial relations and racial feelings; (b) field trips shared by students who would be in the same classes in September; (c) city-wide pupil exchanges; and (d) a two or three day science and arts encampment in which fifth and sixth graders participate together. Students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades might form a youth council to plan projects for the new school setting.
3. Assign in each of the elementary schools additional black teacher aides, a home-school counselor, a psychologist, and a reading teacher where possible. Volunteer parents can also help students adjust under the new plan.

Parents

1. Send to all parents a fact sheet on reorganization, including information on new programs, bus schedules and some of the problems involved.
2. Arrange for all parents of children in Early Childhood Centers and elementary schools to ride the bus route before their children attend schools in the fall.
3. Recruit parents to be supervisors on the buses.
4. PTAs reorganized for each of the new schools should send letters of welcome to parents.

KEY

△ -- Early Childhood Centers

○ -- Grades 3 - 4 - 5 - 6

□ -- Grades 7 and 8

▭ -- Grades 9 - 12

1 - B. Franklin
2 - Boas
3 - Cameron
4 - Downey
5 - Foose
6 - Hamilton
7 - Lincoln
8 - Marshall
9 - Melrose
10 - Riverside
11 - Shimmell
12 - Steele
13 - Webster
14 - Woodward
15 - Camp Curtin
16 - Edison
17 - John Harris
18 - William Penn

SECTION V

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE PLAN FOR QUALITY

DESEGREGATED EDUCATION